1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

goods from the trans-'Iraq route to Muḥammara and the new Persian port of Bandar Shahpur all contributed to lessen the long-profitable transit trade, whose sentence of extinction could not, it seemed, be long delayed unless the Mediterranean route across Syria could be developed; and of this there were hopeful signs.

Banking continued in the hands of local *ṣarrafs* and the three British Banks: the Ottoman, Eastern, and Imperial Bank of Persia. The adoption of the decimal system was officially proclaimed in 1931, though twenty years later the *ḥuqqa*, the *taghar*, the *mann*, and the *dhira'* were still widely in use. Wholesale and retail trade followed familiar channels, with British firms predominating in the foreign element; 30 per cent. of the country's imports were of United Kingdom origin, though neither in this nor in any commercial operation did the Mandatary claim advantage over competitors. Imported goods found favour less by quality than by cheapness; this allowed Japanese competition for the first time to intrude, especially in cheap silk and cotton textiles. Woollen goods and steel came from Belgium, sugar from Holland, vehicles from America, wood from Scandinavia and Rumania, rice and tea from India, and most of the rest, notably cotton textiles, pumps and machinery, from Great Britain. The exports, as ever, were of dates, grain, hides and skins, wool, intestines, liquorice, and live animals. These at lowered prices held their own satisfactorily during the period of depression. Monetary conditions in Europe led, after 1930, to export of gold from 'Iraq, giving a temporary stimulus to its economy.

Until the hard times of 1929 to 1932, which they survived creditably, municipal development and the public services were expanding. A Municipal Law of 1929 superseded the Turkish regulations, municipal revenues were overhauled, and the hundred townships of every size and degree pursued their work of street improvement, bridge building, and provision of gardens, electric power plants, and sometimes officials' houses. In the major towns a period of rapid suburban development began, absorbing capital used hitherto in the transit trade. A 'New Baghdad' was planned on the right bank of the Tigris. The concession given in 1912 for electric power was amended and confirmed, after years of negotiation, in favour of the Baghdad Power and Light Company, and a new power-house came into operation; the tramway project was abandoned. Tolerable hotels appeared in the three cities and in Kirkuk, supplemented by Railway rest-houses at smaller towns. The technique of brick-making, the methods in the building industry, the types of modern dwelling-house, domestic equipment, the scale and resources of the shops: all these advanced incomparably beyond Ottoman standards. European dress was

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

Labor and Materials

The Housing Authority could also take the lead in improving the quality of labor and materials in order to bring the costs of building down. In this task, it should cooperate with the Ministry of Education in reorganizing training methods. It could also advise the Industrial Bank on desirable types of specifications of building materials and should estimate probable requirements so that the Bank could initiate investment to this end in partnership with private enterprise.

The materials produced locally for housing construction are on the whole inferior and expensive. For example, a casual inspection of house construction in the cities will reveal that unevenly burnt bricks with cracks and chipped-off edges and corners have been and are being used. To remedy the shortage of good building materials, foreign goods have been imported at high cost. In the case of the IPC housing project, it was estimated that the cost of imported steel window and door sashes alone amounted to as much as 20 percent of the cost of the structures.

The inferiority of building materials is matched by the poor quality of building labor, which again adds to the cost of construction. There is urgent need for good carpenters, masons, plumbers, electricians and painters. Unfortunately, attempts to improve skills through vocational schools have not been altogether successful. The schools lack competent instructors, a number of those teaching in Baghdad, for example, being illiterate. Workshop accommodations are restricted and the equipment is out-of-date or in bad condition. These deficiencies might be overcome by importing instructors from neighboring countries, by obtaining new equipment and by running evening classes until more laboratory space is available. This is not, however, the full answer. Graduates from vocational schools tend to prefer desk jobs to field work. It would be preferable to concentrate more on training schemes on the job under good supervision.

Government Housing

The Ministry of Social Affairs is empowered by Law No. 38 of 1941 and Law No. 22 of 1945 to "construct dwellings for